



**SOUTH CHESHIRE ADVANCED  
MOTORCYCLISTS  
October/November Newsletter 2022**

## **Contents**

Heavy Metal .....	1
News and Diary Dates .....	1
Message from the Chairman.....	2
Message from the President.....	3
Group Christmas Meal .....	3
IAM North West Forum.....	3
Diary of a Sunday Ride .....	6
I have been thinking! .....	7
Motorcycle Live, NEC .....	7
On the ragged edge at Cadwell Park .....	8
Life after FLOOF, part 1 .....	12
Life after FLOOF, part 2.....	14
The Highlands and Islands of Western Scotland.....	16
The Magnificent Seven Ride Again, Part Three.....	21
THE PEACOCK Menu .....	24



## News and Diary Dates

**Keep abreast of upcoming activities and dates by regularly checking the Facebook page of the South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists Group.**



Club Christmas dinner:

**2 December, 7.00 for 7.30pm,** the Peacock, Nantwich. **Book now!** See inside for details.

Autumn ride outs:

**Saturday Member/Observer rides as announced.**

**Sunday 10.00am** Costa, Grand Junction, Crewe.

**Tuesday 9.30am** Costa, Dorothy Flude Retail Park, Crewe.

**Look smart!** Embroidered South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists leisure wear (see later).

**For Committee contacts** see: <https://www.southcheshiream.org.uk>

The newsletter is now a bimonthly publication. The next issue will be released in January.

## Heavy Metal

I hope you enjoy this bumper Autumn/Winter edition of your newsletter. Special thanks are due to

our contributors for their fascinating and inspirational stories.

Everybody has a story to tell, so please use the wet winter days to throw some words onto a screen and send them to me ready for the January newsletter.

“You will go where you are looking,” applies to most motive sports. The skier who is fixated on the only tree on the mountain is bound to hit it. But what if you want to look at trees and survive. I have been training myself to look at the scenery when riding on fell roads without dropping into an abyss. It should, therefore, have been no surprise, when navigating a figure of eight on the CAMADAR (Congleton and Macclesfield Advanced Drivers and Riders) slow riding course, that when an Observer shouted at me to turn my head to look where I wanted to go, I swung my head round and continued in a perfectly straight line. I quickly reprogrammed my brain and the next attempt was more successful, bar one crushed cone. Comedy aside, the Observers worked hard to help the attendees hone skills and build confidence. Attendance at the event, held on 30



October at Staffordshire Fire Service HQ was well worthwhile and it was great to meet and chat with bikers from all over the area. There were younger riders plus a group of ladies, some with amazing balance skills, as well as the older gentlemen who tend to dominate most IAM events. It was an effective recruiting event for IAM; I introduced a keen young guy to his local group.

As I watch four-wheeled traffic become increasingly inventive in finding new ways to frighten us, I feel it is imperative to get more bikers into the fold. If you have any ideas on how we can spread our recruiting influence to a wider demography please let us know.

Stay vigilant and safe.

*Editor*

### **Message from the Chairman**

Summer days of 40 degrees are now a distant memory and it is hibernation time for most of my bikes. I'll just be using the trusty R1200RT (Beluga) from now until Spring. It's not the most exciting bike to ride but the weather protection is second to none. Together with heated grips and being able to plug

in a heated jacket means it gets my vote. Speaking of heated clothing, I recently got some RST Paragon 6 heated gloves, I can definitely recommend them.

Before my H2 went away for the Winter, I had it professionally detailed by Nigel at Taylor Made Detailing. I've used him before with my Versys and his work and attention to detail are absolutely unbelievable, not cheap but well worth it.



A reminder about the Christmas meal on 2nd December at *The Peacock*, if you would like to come, please let Geoff know.

As this is the last newsletter before Christmas, I would like to wish all the best to you and your families. Have a great Christmas and New Year.

*Dave Cox*



## Message from the President

The clocks have gone back, and now it is starting to feel like winter is on its way. Going to work in the dark and coming home in the dark, not much fun, but we can look forward to Spring.

I have been undertaking training with Mike Marchant on a one-to-one basis, he is nearing test readiness, so watch this space.

Having avoided Covid for three years, I caught it last month, despite having had the vaccine injections, which meant cancelling a trip to Moffatt. I was not happy.

That is all from me for this year. Take care and all the best for Christmas and the New Year.

*Chris Steel.*

## Group Christmas Meal - book now for the festive event of the year

The nights are getting longer and the festive season approaches rapidly.

We've booked a table at *The Peacock* for the group's Christmas meal on Friday 2nd December starting 7.00pm for 7.30. It's three courses for a very reasonable £26.95 per

head, drinks extra. We've booked for 20 places at the moment but can easily add more. There is a £5-00 per person deposit.

Please do come along for a great night out in good company. Feel free to bring your spouse, partner or extra special another, we are always pleased to see them and it adds to the festivities.

Please let me know as soon as possible (**not later than Friday 18 November**) names of people and menu choices. I will let you know how to pay your deposit in due course.

See the last pages (24 & 25) of the newsletter for the menu.

*Geoff Highfield*

*gh@highfieldassociates.co.uk*

IAM

## IAM North West Forum Preston 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022

Everyone loves a Volunteer - and I was "volunteered" to attend the IAM forum as other Committee members were all busy with work and other commitments – thanks everyone!



On the plus side, the Forum included a free buffet lunch!

This forum was for IAM RoadSmart representatives from the North West Clubs of England – basically from Carlisle to North Wales and everything in between. I was sat on a table with folk from Bolton, Chorley and Blackpool. I also spoke with people from Congleton and Manchester. It was a great turnout by so many different IAM clubs, both motorcycle and car.

Steve Ellis, the regions Area Service Delivery Manager (ASDM), introduced us all to the recently appointed CEO of IAM RoadSmart: Mr. Tony Kildare.

Tony welcomed and thanked us for our commitment to road safety and explained how the new DARTS electronic system is having more testing before being “rolled out” live to all our clubs. The Observer run-sheets will also be tested on DARTS from June 2023 with the intention of going “live” from December 2023. This new electronic system will reportedly provide a greater management of everything that IAM do including our Associate training.

Some figures were announced: “2000 advanced tests and 1774 passes” and thus 1774 new full members. Hoorah! I was dreaming at this point of the forthcoming buffet as I was sat right next to the empty buffet table - so I never heard what exactly the figures referred too, but I presume it’s the annual figures for the North West region? Well done to all concerned anyway! Hoorah!

The big news is that the Local Observer (LO) qualification will cease in 2023. The last date for LO registrations will be 01/04/23 and the qualification will no longer be recognised from 01/04/25. It was explained that both National Observers (NO) and LO do exactly the same job and the only difference was being assessed by your local club (Local Observer Assessor) or by a National Observer Assessor – who must be either an examiner or an ASDM. The IAM said that because there are two qualifications it has caused a hierarchy in some clubs, plus there is an additional cost element when someone goes from LO to NO. A number of members voiced their disappointment that this has been decided without any



consultation with the clubs and some thought that many good LOs may leave. It was pointed out that the pass rate for NO is over 90%.

A workshop began and each table was given a question they had to discuss. My table's question was how we could attract more members from 'Diverse' backgrounds. It was generally agreed what the typical IAM member demographic is - but what could we do to attract others – such as younger members, more women, ethnic minorities, LGBT+ etc. I'm not sure we solved this one but were still open to suggestions! The general consensus was that we (the Clubs) aren't getting as many associate members direct from The IAM and the more successful Clubs market themselves. Tony the new CEO (*First name terms already, things are looking up*) made it clear that the IAM will no longer be offering discounts as an incentive to join. In fact, the cost has recently risen to £175.00. Tony thought discounts devalued our brand and will cease.

It was decided by a number of the Clubs attending to form a Regional IAM Forum. This was undertaken by

The Manchester 500 Advanced Motorcyclists Club, who sent me an email later that day with a proposed date and venue for the first meeting – super efficient! Another opportunity to share experiences.

Tony (my best mate) finished the session with a lengthy statement about how important it was for us members, observers and management to treat all with dignity, respect and thus equality. He warned how even “banter” could be misinterpreted and could cause offense or upset. Tony said that The IAM has a “*zero policy*” with regards to any type of “*bullying*” and requested that we choose our words carefully whilst representing or speaking about the IAM. I whole heartily agreed with this statement until someone jumped the buffet queue! Only kidding! Incidentally the buffet was amazing!

Overall, I would say a worthwhile day with plenty of positives for 2023.

*Phill Hamilton (Committee Member, National Observer & Redundant Local Observer Assessor)*



## Ride Outs

### Diary of a Sunday Ride

We met at Costa Coffee at 10am. There were three of us, Andy Gralton, Jeff Roll and myself. We rode to Churchstoke cafe for breakfast where we met Richard Newnham. After that Richard and Andy returned home and Jeff and I continued to Newtown and then onto Malwydd where we had a brew stop at the Mill Cafe.

We returned via Oswestry, stopping at Whitchurch McDonalds for a final brew before arriving home just before 6pm. Total mileage---185.

I try to vary the routes so I'm not repeating the same route on consecutive Sundays as some members come out each week. Come along and join us.

*Dave Coomber*

**RIDE OUT EVERY SUNDAY from Costa Coffee, Grand Junction retail Park, at 10am from 2 Oct.**

*Dave Coomber, Ride Coordinator  
01270569439*

Tuesday rides will run all year round except when there is a risk of ice, drowning or the wrong sort of leaves. Check on Facebook for updates.



**RIDE OUT EVERY TUESDAY – a couple of hours then lunch. Comfort stops as required. Meet at Costa on Dorothy Flude Retail Park, Lockitt St, Crewe CW2 7BB at 9.30am for 10am departure.**

*Howard Payne*

[howard.payne163@gmail.com](mailto:howard.payne163@gmail.com)

**Saturday ride outs will continue monthly and will be announced on Facebook.**

Please note that with the shortening evenings getting darker much earlier, the Wednesday evening ride outs have stopped and will start again next year to coincide with the start of the spring training course on a date yet to be decided.



## Social scene

### **I have been thinking!**

Since crossing the Pennines in 2020, after twenty years in the IAM over there, I have been missing the camaraderie of a monthly social evening meeting. I know I am a bit of a social butterfly but I really enjoy the banter and insults that only bikers can deliver.

We have an excellent team doing the training and lots of ride out opportunities - Sunday, Wednesday evening (seasonal) and the golden oldies Tuesday coffee and progressive adventure rides. Therefore, there is no problem getting a riding fix but a biker social fix is not so easy.

So, my thought is, would any of you be interested in attending a regular, informal, monthly evening meeting? The idea would be to get to know more bikers, bridge the different riding groups and provide an opportunity for new members to get more involved with the club. We might also bring in a speaker occasionally.

Let me know if you are interested, suggest a night that suits you and

propose what you think might be a suitable venue such as a pub, golf club, rugby club, football club etc.

I am keen to make new friends and I am sure many of you would also. What better way to spend a dark evening than talking bikes, rides and all matters in the universe to other bikers.

Please contact me on Facebook, email or WhatsApp.

[Howard.payne163@gmail.com](mailto:Howard.payne163@gmail.com)

Mobile: 07816394869

*Howard Payne*

### **Motorcycle Live, NEC, Tuesday 22 November**

A group of members are travelling to the event on Tuesday 22 Nov on the 9.01 train from Crewe and returning on the 16.55. Please feel free to come along and join us. You will be welcome, the more the better.

*Howard Payne*

***Congratulatory note: Howard Payne, already on the Committee and brimming with ideas and enthusiasm, has been promoted to club Social Secretary. Please support him.***



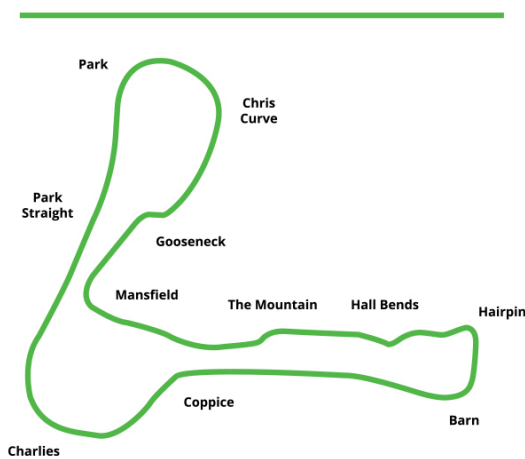


## Trackday Feature

### On the ragged edge at Cadwell Park

It's dark, wet and cold and 04:30 in the morning on the 12<sup>th</sup> September and I'm struggling to get into my one-piece race leathers. Damn you bacon rolls.

Cadwell Park



The idea of a trackday for me, is to explore the limits of possibility and to have huge amounts of fun. Fun can come from many different guises at a trackday, the speed, the acceleration, the banter, the day off work are all possible candidates but soon you will start to add two or three of these together and the fun factor scale is exponential. Add to that the journey there on the bike, a CB500S, covered in fur (the FLOOF)

and the day is almost guaranteed to be a success before you've even set off into the dark, wet and cold morning.

I eventually tucked everything I could into the leathers and managed to get the zip up. Then into my waterproofs and then I pointed the little furry CB500 east and headed to Cadwell Park which according to Google maps is 130 miles away. All was going great until 126 miles when I went over a bump in the road and my left-hand foot peg snapped off. I circled back around and found the remnants of the foot peg in the verge; it had snapped off about 1 inch from the pivot. It was just enough to rest my toe on and operate the gears but not so good for the track. I soldiered on, cussing loudly. However, the sun was out and trying to dry the roads up.

<https://youtu.be/Kkj7-acPiZE>

Arriving at Cadwell I met up with a few of the Twitter crowd. I pointed at the snapped peg and wondered what the solution could be then, as if Occam himself was there one of the blokes said, "why not use a pillion peg?" Of course, this was the perfect solution so a quick swap and I was



back in business. Stuffed a bacon roll had a brew then sat about waiting for the noise test check and the safety briefing.

The exhaust on the FLOOF is a cobbled together, cheapest I could find, eBay special that did not have the baffle fitted. However, we passed the noise check so it must have been under 102dB then a bit more waiting around until the novice group I was in was called. Novice? Yes. First time to Cadwell and 4<sup>th</sup> time on track. That in my mind and according to the NoLimits track day organisers rules means I should be a novice. This was going to be fun.

### Session 1

Unhindered with the need for generators and tyre warmers and track stands I was ready at the first call and waiting for the two others in my group. I was with, a 32-year-old ZXR400 ridden by an experienced trackdayer and a young chap on an R1. I meandered down to the holding area and shrugged off the pointing and staring along with the name calling and was focused on the familiarisation laps. Now I've never been to Cadwell before but I have done my homework on the

Playstation so at least I knew my way around and what to expect. Until of course I get out on track and it's the same but massively different. For one, it was still wet and the FLOOF still had 19-year-old BT45 tyres on; they are not at their best in the wet. The 3<sup>rd</sup> corner out of the trap is the hairpin. I went sideways into that one and immediately regretted my blasé tyre choice. Then it was a run through Barn corner under the trees,



still fully wet, and then the start-finish straight. No overtaking on sighting laps so I kept pace with the group that was being led around by an instructor. About  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way around the red flags came out and I thought that's great they are showing us where the flag marshalls are. Nope, it was a genuine red flag, someone had gone off on the sighting lap! So, we returned to the holding area while they got scooped up in the trailer. Another sighting lap followed and then we were off.



Great fun on a narrow circuit and many of the riders in the group were clearly nervous in the wet so plenty of space was required for any overtakes. The CB500 has little to no speed down the straights so was often overtaken by the big bikes, but that's just cheating.

<https://youtu.be/8dXnDpOq2gl>



## Session 2

The track now had a definite dry line and the footpegs were starting to make themselves known – I should really learn the correct body position. I was having a great time and really starting to mix it with the sports bikes. They'd leave me standing down the straights and I'd overtake them around Chris Curve or into the gooseneck or up the mountain, doing wheelies or through Hall bends or into the Hairpin only for them to sprint back past me down the straight. I could

overtake them again at coppice or Charlies then they'd sprint back past along part straight only to be overtaken again at park corner. It was hilarious and I was really enjoying myself. The FLOOF never missed a beat and the tyres were enjoying the dry bits.



<https://youtu.be/og3iiEQUIHM>

## Session 3

I was now in that danger zone of getting too cocky. At this point I normally have a word with myself and ease off but things were going well and I was invincible, on the brakes and around the corners, not so much on the straights. The track was dry and the sun was out and all the people in the novice group that were on slick tyres and race bikes started to gain speed through the corners. I was already at full speed so needed to start to really push the envelope to catch and pass the bigger bikes and eventually the



inevitable happened. I ran out of talent, ground clearance and grip all at the same time and had a little lie down in the grass. Many expletives were uttered between bouts of laughter. Because it was very funny indeed.

<https://youtu.be/Zd2NSB1Fi6A>

#### **Session 4**

Session 4 was spent with a scaffold tube straightening out my handlebars that had been bent so far that the steering was unusable, and also fixing the right-hand foot peg that had snapped off. Luckily, I had a spare pillion one that did the trick but now I was all out of spare footpegs.

#### **Session 5**

Session 5 was more about getting straight back on the horse, the bars were not quite straight the exhaust was working but mangled and the footpegs were fine, except they didn't have any spring back or hero blobs.

The main man from FlieOnTheVisor website

<https://fliesonthevisor.com/>

had made the journey over and had put a GoPro on the bike for an article he was writing.

<https://fliesonthevisor.com/three-seconds-faster-at-cadwell-park/>

I started out slow, just to see if there was anything wrong with the bike but after a lap it was fine, bar the odd riding position due to the handlebars. So, I cracked on, had a word with myself when the red mist descended and kept within the limits of physics. I managed a PB time of 2.03, I overtook some bikes with 3x my BHP and had some great fun. Which is what it's all about.

<https://youtu.be/VaEb66EcdKQ>

As session 5 was finishing the rain started so I'd made the decision to head home.

I got a bit lost on the way and ended up having to filter Nottingham town centre at rush hour which was as much fun as the trackday to be honest. Then there were two huge tailbacks on the A50 and A500 - the FLOOF was in its element, full rain, filtering and getting to the front. I'm always an advocate of stretching yourself because that's where the real learning takes place, and on the



12/09/22 at Cadwell's Hairpin I learnt about the limits of traction and I'm better for it.

*Neil Jewell (Photographs courtesy of Peter Wileman Photography Ltd).*

## Technical

### Life after FLOOF, part 1

Dear Avid reader, The FLOOF has gone. It went onto a better life somewhere near Aberdeen. It only needed new handle bars, exhaust and footpegs along with three hours removing all traces of fur and it was snapped up making me zero profit which is pretty standard.

This has left a gap in the garage for the next project to be pushed in. A resurrection from beyond the grave. A bike destined for the scrappy that will be given one last fling (around a track or two) before being sent happily on its way to retirement.

What bike would fit the bill? A fox eye Fireblade, a K5 GSXR1000 perhaps? No, a Honda NT650V Deauville from 1999 was the perfect candidate.



*The Deauville*

The bike arrived many months ago and has been under a sheet in the garden, before then it was not under a sheet in someone else's garden. It is rusty, tatty, none of the faring bolts look to be original or even the same. It was sold with a spare engine that had been run without water and the engine that is in it jumps out of first gear. As projects go this was going to be a good one. The initial plan was to make one good engine out of the two bad ones and then deal with everything else that is wrong. Fork seals, rust etc. haven't even looked at the brakes yet.

Thinking that this would be something simple like the gear selector detents broken and just needing a swap, I thought I was onto a winner, quickly removing the clutch cover and the clutch to get in and see the gubbins swap the broken



stuff from the spare engine and we would be good to go. Alas that was not the case. The Deauville needs some serious internal work and a new name so from this point on it shall be known as the DullVile.

Gearboxes jump out of gear for a few reasons, the main one is the detents. The little mechanisms that hold the gear stick in that gear. Or something majorly bad inside the gearbox itself. Betting on the former I bought the bike and having the spare engine was like a safety net of readily available parts. If it was the latter then no massive problem it just means more bolts to undo. The initial optimistic delve into the bike proved the latter and the decision was made to go in. The other option would have been to repair the top end of the engine that was out but it had other issues so not feasible due to cost.

The DullVile was a lot of plastic, this all came of mostly intact and is left as is in the shed, spiders an all. The engine needed to be removed, so general undoing of nuts and bolts commenced and soon enough it was dangling precariously on a trolley jack ready for the big heave. At that

exact moment the Chairman arrived for a brew so I made him earn it by operating the lowering of the jack while I guided the engine down to the floor. With no room to move the engine out we lifted the bike off the top of the engine and it was free. Perfect time for a well-earned Brew.

Gearboxes on bikes are simple. They are very much like mechanical 3D puzzles and actually getting to them can be hard as they are buried deep in the bowls of the engine casing which in this case need to be split in



half. Everything on the engine and everything inside the engine covers needs to be removed. So that means Cylinder heads, barrels, cam shafts,

cam chain, clutch assembly, flywheel (special tool required) and carbs. Then you are left with the pistons flopping about and the engine casing itself that is held together tightly with many bolts of many different sizes. Only once all the bolts are located and removed the delicate task of splitting the cases happens. Using some very gentle persuasion the two halves are coaxed apart to reveal their secrets.

The secret is that the two engines are not from the same bike. The spare gearbox I have is a different design to the one I'm looking at. Will it work or wont it? but first to investigate what might be the reason for this bike to be jumping out of first gear.

### **Life after FLOOF, part 2**

Welcome back avid reader to the tale of woe that is the DullVile Project. The engine is out of the bike and stripped and in many, many pieces. The gearbox needs to be inspected to determine the root cause of the bike jumping out of first gear. Only then, when we are confident the fault has been found can we start the long process of

cleaning up and putting another gearbox back in.



Putting the two gearboxes side by side there was some clear design differences. The original jumping one had some obvious wear to the first gear dog teeth, these are what



engage with the other gears and then transmit the drive through to the gear teeth and beyond. These had been worn to a taper so when first gear was being used, rather than transmit drive they would ride up and jump out of gear. See photos. The spare gearbox was a totally different design with much stronger looking engagement lugs so I assumed it must have been a design fault that was rectified. Happy that I have identified the problem I could start building the bike back up. Engine rebuilds need to be done in a reasonable clean environment. Years of leaking and general grime was coating the engine and it was filthy inside and out. So, I invested in a parts washer, basically a large tub filled with degreasing solvent with a pump attached to a brush. Makes quick work of removing grease and oily grime from your dirty bits.

All gaskets would need to be replaced as well as a few other coolant fixtures and fitting that were cracked and leaking, so off on a shopping spree to the internet. I'll use eBay where possible but there's always a few parts that need to come from the main dealer. While waiting

on parts traces of old gasket were removed from all mating surfaces and cleaned up with some 120grit emery paper.

The new-old gearbox went into the engine casing and I put the two halves back together to test run it through the gears. Neutral, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> were fine but it would not go into 1<sup>st</sup>. the change in gearbox design was to blame and after some investigations I noticed that the selector fork for 1<sup>st</sup> was hitting the engine casing itself. There was nothing for it but to grab the power tools and make it fit. I removed around ¼" of the material from the selector rod location boss in the crankcase to allow the selector fork room to move and it worked like a charm. Another test fit of the gears in place with the mechanism proved that all gears could be selected. Now, it's just a case of putting it all back together.

Keep up with this exciting project here:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtG1SCfnr8FZK-RGN-molBualnr0skVJV>





## Great Rides

### The Highlands and Islands of Western Scotland, and back: 4 days and 3 nights

#### *The road north*

You need a strategy to get past Glasgow to access the Highlands. The M6 (becoming A74(M) around Gretna Green), is the obvious and most direct route. This was the one chosen when Richard Downes, Ant Beeston and I took on a tour of the Inner Hebrides.

With the right mindset and a stop every hour, these early stages slipped by at GPS 70 and by midday we'd made it to Erskine Bridge, the portal that takes you from urban Clydeside to the resplendent Highlands and Islands.

Once crossed, satisfaction can be taken from the steady miles that got you there, made emphatic by the immediate change of pace - peace takes over from dogged motorway progress. From hereon, it's the high-quality tarmac of Scottish twisties, flanked by lochs and ancient rugged

outcrops. Long-haired cows look on, through devil-may-care ginger moptops.

#### *The breakdown - rest and be thankful - Tarbet to Tarbert*

It was probably amongst the woodland detritus, close to a portaloo outside Tarbet, that something sharp worked its way into the rear tyre of Ant's BM. We made progress along the planned route



*Ant on the phone at Rest-and-be-Thankful car park*

taking in the Old Military Road, just off Rest-and-be-Thankful (aren't Scottish road names brilliant?). Appropriately, the tyre went flat on Rest-and-be-Thankful and enforced a break.

Considering the pending remoteness of any given spot of the miles ahead, it was remarkable that, when we could go no further, at a vantage point on the route we were following



was a car park with a butty van. The location is aptly described in What3Words: **neat.tamed.solutions**

We stopped, had a good old poke around with Richard's puncture repair kit then called BMW breakdown.

It is to Ant's credit that, with echoes of Antarctic hero Captain Oates, he set Richard and me free, "You lads go on - I may be here for some time..."

(Ant's tale from this point, until he re-joined us twenty-four hours later, is worth knowing. It could be added to the SCAM Newsletter annals at some later point, if Ant can find the literary urge, and with a bit of encouragement...)

Pressed for time now, Richard and I made spirited progress along some of the most picturesque tarmac, anywhere. The B8000 is a destination in itself. It runs along the east bank of Loch Fyne. It's beautiful, challenging and leads to Portavadie - the ferry point to Tarbert.

We arrived at the ferry, I kid you not, in time's finest of nicks. We rolled onto the last crossing of the afternoon as its stern lifted behind

us and it pushed on to Tarbert. Marvellous.

### ***Roll-on, roll-off***

Tarbert gave us the road to Oban, where we stayed the night. We'd covered around 350 miles that day.



*Western Highlands and Islands Day 1*

It was an early start the following morning. We headed to the Oban Ferry Terminal where we mixed with men and women on the dockside - fellow motorcyclists who had ridden from various parts of Europe to take this ferry.

Bikers talk to bikers adding to the richness of any tour.

Clouds hung just above the water on Oban Bay. You could see the sky above them and the sea below.

The Caledonian MacBrayne *Isle of Mull* rolled in from the mist and opened its roll-on-rear to the travellers on the quay.



On the ferry itself, there was a well manned tethering point where a couple of big Scottish lads strapped down the bikes with more care than might have been anticipated. There's something special about



*Western Highlands and Islands Day 2*

taking your bike on a ferry: one transport type carrying another; choppy sea; receding coastline; rolling on and rolling off. Fabulous.

We took four ferries in all. Each was distinctive but that same frisson ran through them all.



*Coastal road, Mull*

## ***The Islands***

The Inner Hebrides offer beautiful destinations. Worth spending more time exploring than we could afford. While the Isle of Mull offered remoteness and Celtic wilderness. Actually, the highlight that led from Mull was the road to Morar, from the ferry at Movern. The A861 was a car and a half wide with the finest of surfaces – like the best roads in Luxembourg. It snaked past Loch Sunart through wooded hills and valleys, and took us on to the Hebridean coast. (If the weather's good, you can see the “Small Isles” of the Hebrides: Muck and Eigg.)

The road took us the Morar and the hotel that bears its name. Ant had arrived earlier and greeted us with a proprietorial welcome, having had his own one-day adventure following an epic Highland Route from a tyre specialist in Glasgow.

Back to full strength, the three of us set off to Skye the following morning. The more compelling of the two islands was chosen for this tour. The looming Cuillin Mountains follow your progress around the winding coastal roads; the ocean competing for your attention. We stopped on a



couple of vantage points to take in both.



*Western Highlands and Islands Day 3*

As you ride into Uig, north of the Island on the A87, a clearly marked Restaurant comes into view. The sign dominates the town and you feel drawn to it. That we would end up there was inevitable.

The Restaurant overlooked the port, which had its share of fishing boats and opened up to the Outer Hebrides and the North Atlantic beyond. It was harsh and masculine -



*Cullen skink*

how you might imagine a South Atlantic whaling station.

This masculinity spilled into the Restaurant, where the all-male staff served up **cullen skink**\* in polystyrene trays. While the fair was basic, the guys were upbeat, kind and welcoming - a unique service that could be recommended.

It was good to ride away from Uig.\*\*

We took the A87 to the magnificent causeway over the water, where Loch Alsh meets the Inner Sound, to mainland Scotland and on to Fort William. We stayed the night in the Alexandra Hotel. Beer, dinner (passed on the cullen skink) and bed.

### ***Glen Coe and the road south***

The gloriousness of the Scottish tour kept on giving, south to the border. Like a grand finale to the whole trip, the A82 carves majestically through Glencoe, with its harsh natural beauty forever bound to its brutal and sorrowful past.

This road alone was worth the trip. Possibly more so now, as scenes from the Bond movie Skyfall were filmed close by - near to the point where you cross the river Etive.



(Tourism is up as a result, so probably at its best out of season.)

Erskine Bridge snapped us back into urban Scotland. From hereon it was motorways home. The mind-set was that of the end of any tour: the dogged determination to cover miles with the briefest of stops.

One visit was not enough. This whole tour was unique with the life affirming qualities that bring you into biking in the first place. The route itself was devised and shared with us by Richard, see below\*\*\*

It's likely that we will follow some of the roads there and back at some point in the future. On that occasion, we'll risk the rougher route and ride the Ferry from Tobermory, (Mull's standout town), which will take us to the Outer Hebrides. If we get there, and if you're interested, we'll let you know.

*Ed Liptrot*

**Footnotes:**

*\*Cullen skink is a warming Scottish broth consisting of potatoes, smoked haddock, milk and butter - amongst other ingredients. Reminiscent of*

*New England Chowder, some would say.*

*\*\*The Uig Restaurant: The toilets are unusual. Very, very dark and boxed off with blind corners, like the opening to a labyrinth. Just above the urinals, scratched into the black painted walls was a promise: 'Welcome to Uig, you'll never leave'... Not every night, but often, flashbacks will bring you from your sleep and, with a gasp, you'll find yourself bolt upright in a cold sweat with a dry mouth and the smokey aftertaste of cullen skink.*

*\*\*\*Richard Downes has built up a fair collection of routes over the years. He plots them on the Garmin program for GPS maps called Basecamp. These can then be uploaded onto your GPS with a couple of clicks. Like all of his planned trails this one is researched, varied and collaborative. It takes in different road types, terrains and points of interest. (See the screenshots above).*

*Richard is happy to share the route with SCAM members. If you're interested, feel free to contact him.*



## The Magnificent Seven Ride Again, Part Three

Tuesday morning and having had a good night's sleep, we assembled in the restaurant and had breakfast. Looking at the map it was going to be a day of progress, and who better to lead than John Brady.

We left Baden-Baden and travelled on the B500 through the Black Forest, a cracking road with great views. Those who have travelled it will know exactly what I mean, that's another place to put on your to do



list. We stopped for coffee at a nice café overlooking the mountains. The view was stunning. It seemed a shame to leave, but we had to, as Italy was still a way off. We took the scenic route through Germany. We stopped for fuel where I asked Ian if we were in Switzerland yet. He thought we were but out of curiosity asked the man in the petrol kiosk.

He said no, it was Liechtenstein. We could now say we had done four countries in one day. On arriving at the Swiss border, we purchased our toll tickets. This is where it all became complicated, deciding whether to pay in Euro or Swiss Francs. We decided Swiss Francs gave us the best exchange rate, duly paid and got our tickets. John explained that the next part of the route was not very scenic as we needed to cover a fair distance on motorways and dual carriageways. It was the usual cavalry charge. The miles rolled on and the scenery was still stunning - Swiss mountains versus Crewe centre, no contest really. We turned off the motorway and I thought we were nearing our destination but it turned out that John's Aunt used to own a hotel and he wanted to see it again; a nostalgia trip. The building was being renovated and had scaffolding all over it. John and Dave Nixon started to assess the quality of workmanship as per usual. Five thirty was approaching and it was time we made a move. John felt an hour and a half should see us at our hotel. We crossed into Italy with no drama; although the border control was



manned there seemed little interest in checking any of the vehicles. We entered the town of Cannobio where we were staying, straight into road works. John followed his usual practice and overtook everything straight to the front of the queue. The rest of us showed more restraint and courtesy, filtering when appropriate. Having got through the road works we regrouped. My satnav had the Villa Palmira in its memory and I led the way into a narrow street, barely wide enough for a car, with six-foot walls either side of us. We stopped at a bar and asked directions which led us to a car park. Eventually, a large pair of gates was spotted at the back of the car park saying Villa Palmira; we rang the buzzer and the gates opened. The building was just how you would imagine an Italian villa to be, it was beautiful. We checked in and our hosts, a young couple who I suspect had not long been running the hotel long, showed us to elegant and spacious rooms. Ian being an executive was used to such grandeur, as for me I was somewhat overawed. As it was after 7pm we decided to get a quick shower and find somewhere to eat. We assembled in

reception and walked to the water's edge of Lake Maggorie where there were bars and restaurants. John was obviously hungry as he chose the eating place in a matter of seconds. It was 8pm, the sun was still warm



and we sat watching the world go by. With the lake in the background, it could not get much better. I thought as we were in Italy, I should have a pizza. What a disappointment, probably the worst pizza I have ever had. John being an expert on pizza and having had one himself explained that the base was overdone and too hard. He was banned from choosing any more places to eat for the rest of the holiday. We did the usual tourist thing and had a stroll round Cannobio, occasionally stopping at a bar. It had been a long day with four countries so we made our way back to the villa thinking about the morrow. A nice leisurely ride into



the mountains was proposed before we retired for the night.

TO BE CONTINUED.

*Chris Steel*

## Club Merchandise

Please see below for the link to your Club shop with various items of apparel now available, beautifully embroidered with the Club logo:

<https://customsportskit.co.uk/other-clubs/south-cheshire-advanced-motorcyclists/>

## Editor's Plea

Many thanks to this month's excellent contributors. Keep telling me about your biking adventures, bloopers, ambitions, bike reviews, new kit, top tips, personal sale items and any bike, riding or road related issues that are, or should be, a matter for concern. Please attach photos separately, ideally with a list of captions.

[david@creedy.net](mailto:david@creedy.net)

## For Sale/Wanted

Portable radios for sale. One of the units does not seem to hold charge, the others are fine. Includes manual for T80/T80 Extreme/T81 Hunter. Offers in excess of £50 are invited. Contact Neil by email: [neil\\_jewell@btinternet.com](mailto:neil_jewell@btinternet.com)



Why not sort through all those unused items, which seemed essential at the time, and turn them into cash. Alternatively, if you are desperately hunting for an item, send the details for listing in the next issue. There is no charge for advertising personal items. Please include your contact details.





## THE PEACOCK Menu

221 Crewe Road, Willaston,  
Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 6NE

### FESTIVE MENU

#### STARTERS

##### Slow Roasted Tomato Arancini (V)

Served with pesto & slow roasted tomato sauce

##### Pan-fried Scallops and King Prawns\* (+£2.50)

Served with tomato concasse, spring onions and lemon butter sauce

##### King Prawn & Mango Cocktail\*

Dressed with a Bloody Mary marie rose sauce served with sourdough bread

##### Oven-baked button mushrooms\* (V)

Cheddar & garlic sauce, truffle infused oil, pumpkin seeds, toasted rustic bread

##### Shallot & Armagnac Tart Tatin\* (VE)

Served with pickled cherries & toasted pine nuts

##### Duck Parfait\*

Served with a smokey flavoured tomato & apple chutney and toasted rustic bread

##### Today's soup (V)

Served with sourdough bread and butter.  
Vegan option available

#### MAINS

##### Forestière Chicken Breast\*

Stuffed with spinach & mozzarella, wrapped in pancetta with a wild mushroom sauce served with spinach and skin on fries

##### Hand-carved turkey breast

Served with a Yorkshire pudding  
Cumberland & red onion pigs in blanket, roast potatoes, honey-roasted carrots & parsnips, glazed sprouts, Romano beans and gravy

##### Turkey, smoked pancetta & cranberry pie\*

In a pancetta & leek sauce, topped with puff pastry, served with mash, glazed sprouts and a veal jus

##### 8oz Sirloin Steak

Cooked to your liking and served with beef dripping sauce, thyme-roasted tomato, triple-cooked chips and slow-roasted garlic.

*Upgrade to our 10oz Ribeye Steak for £4*

##### Pan-Fried Seabass Fillets\*

Served with steamed greens beans, crispy potatoes, clams, king prawns, bouillabaisse sauce topped with lemon Aioli



### **Roasted Squash and Brie Tart (V)**

Filled with brie, vintage cheddar & truffle flavour sauce served with tenderstem® broccoli, crispy diced herb potatoes and a basil pesto

### **Curried Vegetable Wellington (VE)**

Lightly spiced curried parsnip and butternut squash wrapped in vegan puff pastry served with tenderstem® broccoli & crispy parmentier potatoes

### **Slow-cooked pork belly\***

With roasted apple, chestnut & wilted spinach, Dauphinoise potatoes, crackling and a red wine jus.

## **SIDES**

Red cabbage (+£2.50)

Brussel Sprouts (+£2.50)

Pigs in Blankets (+£2.95)

Trio of sides\* (+£5.95)

Including Pigs in blankets, sprouts with pomegranate seeds, roast potatoes and red wine jus.

## **DESSERTS**

### **Festive Vanilla Crème Brûlée (V)**

Glazed with cinnamon & nutmeg sugar, served with home-baked butter biscuit

### **Double Chocolate Brownie\* (V)**

With Irish Liqueur Ice cream

### **Cheese Board (V) (+£3)**

Coastal Cheddar, Double Gloucester, Blue Shropshire, Cenarth Brie with a smokey flavoured tomato chutney, savoury biscuits, butter & grapes

### **Christmas pudding (V)\***

Filled with vine fruits and soaked in rum, served warm with brandy sauce. Vegan alternative available (VE)

### **Trio of Ice cream (V)**

Your choice of ice cream with Belgian chocolate sauce. Also refer to ice cream choice recipes for additional allergen & dietary information

### **Bramley Apple Pie**

Served warm with custard. Vegan alternative available (VE).